

To: Mears, Mary[Mears.Mary@epa.gov]
Cc: Enck, Judith[Enck.Judith@epa.gov]
From: Lee, Miseon
Sent: Tue 4/7/2015 9:13:34 PM
Subject: RE: Here is the statement and an earlier news release

Great, thank you.

I think Judith mentioned an even more updated one than the one below? Unless I misunderstood...

From: Mears, Mary [mailto:Mears.Mary@epa.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, April 07, 2015 5:13 PM
To: Lee, Miseon
Cc: Enck, Judith
Subject: Here is the statement and an earlier news release

Hi Mi Seon,

Below is the statement from yesterday and also the news release we issued March 23.

Mary Mears

Acting Director Public Affairs and Chief Public Outreach Branch

U.S. EPA Region 2 (NJ, NY, PR, the US VI and eight Indian Nations)

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Statement from EPA on Potential Pesticide Incident in the U.S. Virgin Islands

4/6/2015

The EPA continues to work closely with the U.S. Virgin Island government to investigate an incident reported to EPA on March 20, 2015 in which paramedics responded to a call that four people in a family staying at the Sirenusa Condominium Resort in Cruz Bay, St. John became very ill.

EPA took action and the agency has conducted sampling at the site. EPA staff remains on-site to assist the investigation.

The EPA is investigating to not only address what happened, but also to ensure this does not happen to anyone else. EPA will ensure that appropriate steps are taken if it is determined any environmental regulations or laws were violated. EPA is working cooperatively with the Virgins Islands government, The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry and Department of Justice.

The use of Meth-O-Gas, which is the product used in this incident, is restricted due to its acute toxicity. Only certified applicators are allowed to use it in certain agricultural settings and it is not authorized for use in indoor dwellings. Health effects of acute exposure to methyl bromide are serious and include central nervous system and respiratory system damage. Pesticides can be very toxic and it is critically important that they be used only as approved by EPA. For more information about EPA's pesticide program and its requirements, visit <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/>. For more information on methyl bromide, visit <http://www.epa.gov/region2/methyl-bromide.pdf>.

News release (from March 23)

EPA Responds to Incident that Leaves Four People Ill on St. John

EPA Working with U.S. Virgin Islands Government on Ongoing Investigation

Contact: Mary Mears (212) 637-3673; mears.mary@epa.gov

(Monday, March 23, 2015) The EPA is working closely with the U.S. Virgin Island government to investigate an incident reported to the U.S. Virgin Islands government and EPA on March 20, 2015. On March 20, 2015, paramedics responded to a call that four people in a family staying at the Sirensa Condominium Resort in Cruz Bay, St. John became very ill. Family members were subsequently hospitalized.

The EPA is looking into whether the family was made ill by a pesticide called methyl

bromide, which may have been used to fumigate a room at the resort on March 18, 2015. The use of methyl bromide in the U.S. is restricted due to its acute toxicity. Only certified applicators are allowed to use it in certain agricultural settings and is not authorized for use in dwellings. Health effects of acute exposure to methyl bromide are serious and include central nervous system and respiratory system damage.

“Pesticides can be very toxic and it is critically important that they be applied properly and used only as approved by EPA,” said Judith A. Enck, EPA Regional Administrator. “Protecting people’s health in the U.S. Virgin Islands is of paramount importance. The EPA is actively working to determine how this happened and will make sure steps are taken to prevent this from happening to others at these vacation apartments or elsewhere.”

The EPA is continuing to work with the U.S. Virgin Islands government and others to gather information and will ensure that appropriate steps are taken if it determines any environmental regulations or laws were violated.

For more information about EPA’s pesticide program and its requirements, visit <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/>. For more information on methyl bromide, visit <http://www.epa.gov/region2/methyl-bromide.pdf>.

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